



**QUARTERLY
STRATEGY PERFORMANCE REPORT
MARCH 2021**













SECTION A:
STRATEGIC KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
(KPIs)

This section provides a quarterly update against the 20 strategy metrics.

Where the data collection mechanics have not yet been established and/or no new data is currently available, metric boxes have a strike through. Where data is being reported for the first time and there are no previous statistics to track movement against, this is indicated in the metric box.

Where there are previous statistics, this is displayed in the metric box along with a movement indicator.

Movement	For metrics where we are seeking to achieve upward tracking	For metrics where we are seeking to achieve downward tracking
Significant improvement	 Solid green upward arrow	 Solid green downward arrow
Moderate improvement	 Hollow green upward arrow	 Hollow green downward arrow
No change	 Amber horizontal arrow	 Amber horizontal arrow
Moderate deterioration	 Hollow red downward arrow	 Hollow red upward arrow
Significant deterioration	 Solid red downward arrow	 Solid red upward arrow

For metrics which require supporting/qualitative information (eg profiles, impact reports), the information is attached as further appendices.

INFORM & SUPPORT

AWARENESS

Metric 1

Annual Membership Survey (AMS) - % response rate

2020 Roll-out 0.80%

2020 Soft-Launch 0.98%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Jan 2022)

Metric 2

Annual Membership Survey Question 8 - % of responders selecting options 1,2,3 (awareness of membership of Association)

2020 Roll-out 95.1%

2020 Soft-Launch 89.0%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Jan 2022)



Metric 3

Annual NSS Question 26 - % of responders selecting “N/A” (proxy for not aware)

No new data available until 2021 NSS results are published (anticipated July 2021)

Metric 4

#new visitors to website & Hoot (rolling 12 month figures)

Website:	Hoot:
 Year to Feb 2021 – 220,162 Year to Feb 2020 – 189,718 (significant improvement)	 Year to Feb 2021 – 14,941 Year to Feb 2020 – 8,365 (significant improvement)

Good improvement in website visitors year-on-year. Although we are tracking a rolling 12 months to avoid reporting peaks and troughs throughout the year, we do still experience a two year cycle where a 12 month period spanning conference and main elections will likely track higher.

Now that the Hoot is 2 years old we are able to show a year-on-year comparison for the first time – this is showing a fantastic growth in visitors from year 1 of its operation to year 2, reflecting the effort and investment that has been made into promotion, generating content and encouraging student contributions.

INFORM & SUPPORT

RELEVANCE

Metric 5

Service/resource usage – #students per area

[See summary on pg 6](#)

Positive increases showing for Society membership and users for Peer Support and Library Support services.

Newsletter engagement levels, shop activity and TOTUM cards have dipped again and Togetherall users are trending downwards

Metric 6

#returning visitors to website & Hoot (rolling 12 month figures)

Website:

Year to Feb 2021 – 47,896

Year to Feb 2020 – 44,372
(moderate improvement)



Hoot:

Year to Feb 2021 – 2,350

Year to Feb 2020 – 1,316
(significant improvement)



Good growth showing year-on-year. If we look at returning visitors as a % of new visitors (metric 4) however then the rate are holding steady at c22% for the website and c16% for the Hoot, suggesting more work to do on relevance to encourage return visits.

Metric 7

Social Media Engagements (Assoc Twitter a/c) – % of total impressions

3 months to Feb 2021 – 2.63%

3 months to Nov 2020 – 2.02%
(moderate improvement)



Slight improvement in engagement this period, but running generally at our average levels of 2-3%. There were no skewing high engagement posts this period, but the highest engagement posts continue to be those around Freshers and merchandise (c5%) and posts with polls, quizzes, discount offers and giveaways.

Metric 8

Annual Membership Survey Questions 15 & 16 - % (median) of service/resource users who would recommend

From 2020 survey:
Services users – median 88%
Resources users – median 71%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Jan 2022)

Service/Resource Description	Measurement Basis	Measurements	Measurements	Measurements	Change
		Sept 2020	Dec 2020	Mar 2021	
Societies	As at reporting date	22	22	22	None
Societies members	As at reporting date	6,867	7,045	7,355	Increase
Shop orders	In quarter prior to reporting date	704	830	521	Decrease
Shop average order value	In quarter prior to reporting date	£32.56	£33.57	£31.58	Decrease
Assoc newsletter new sign-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date	260	588	391	Decrease
Assoc newsletter open rates	Average for quarter prior to reporting date	25.5%	35.5%	32.9%	Decrease
Assoc newsletter click through rates	Average for quarter prior to reporting date	3.3%	4.8%	3.8%	Decrease
Welsh newsletter new sign-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date	-	-	84	-
Welsh newsletter open rates	For issue prior to reporting date	-	-	39.9%	-
Welsh newsletter click through rates	For issue prior to reporting date	-	-	8.2%	-
YouTube Video Views	In quarter prior to reporting date	-	3,482	2,529	Decrease
TOTUM cards	For 12 months prior to reporting date	14,873	13,602	13,027	Decrease
Peer Support Users	For 12 months prior to reporting date	125	90	115	Increase
Library Support Requests	For 12 months prior to reporting date	63	65	70	Increase
Togetherall New Registrations	Average per month for reporting quarter	168	160	154	Decrease
Ouset successful applications	Most recent presentation/academic year	-	(2020 J/K) 46	(2021 E/B) 12	Decrease

ENGAGE & INVOLVE

ENGAGEMENT

Metric 9
 Election participation – % eligible voters taking part

Main elections:
 2020 - 1.13%
 2018 - 0.82%

By-elections:
 2020 - 0.75%
 2019 - 0.76%
 2018 - 0.51%


No new elections held since 2020 main election & by-elections

Metric 10
 Activities participation - students per activity type

[See summary on pg 8](#)

We are seeing positive growth in membership numbers across our Clubs and Groups. The number of online events and meetings was lower than the previous period but reflective of reduced activity across the Christmas and New Year period.

Metric 11
 Quarterly volunteering participation - volunteers active in roles and applications

<p>Active in roles – Year on year tracking: 3 months to Feb 2021 – average 246 3 months to Feb 2020 – average 222  (moderate improvement)</p>	<p>Active in roles – month on month tracking: Feb 2021 – 244 Jan 2021 – 240 Dec 2020 – 253</p>
--	--

Applications:
 3 months to Feb 2021 – applicants 42 (% new volunteers = 69%)
 3 months to Nov 2020 - applicants 30 (% new volunteers = 57%)

Growth in active roles year-on-year is due to fewer vacancies within the CCR and SRG cohorts against the comparable time period last year, increases in meet-up and online host roles and the introduction of the new Student Experience Link role during 2020.

The dip in active roles from December 2020 is due in part to resignations from within the CEC & Trustees, along with small reductions in active CCR and SRG members and peer supporters. There is a positive trend in the percentage of new volunteers within recent recruitment activity, reflecting our efforts to create more accessible, flexible and inclusive volunteering opportunities.

Activity Description	Measurement Basis	Measurements Sept 2020	Measurements Dec 2020	Measurements Mar 2021	Change
DSG members	As at reporting date	397	585	643	Increase
OU Pride (formerly PLEXUS) members	As at reporting date	590	578	606	Increase
BAME FB members	As at reporting date	57	79	99	Increase
Clubs	As at reporting date	56	56	76	Increase
Club members	As at reporting date	9,784	10,143	11,509	Increase
Number of online events & meet-ups	In quarter prior to reporting date	-	55	31	Decrease

ENGAGE & INVOLVE

REACH

Metric 12

Profiling of election participants – % penetration of member segments

No new elections held since 2020 main election & by-elections

Metric 13

Annual profiling of engaged students – % penetration of member segments

Not yet available

Metric 14

Annual profiling of volunteers – % penetration of member segments

Not yet available

INFLUENCE & TRANSFORM

IMPACT

Metric 15

Annual Membership Survey Question 25 - % of responders agreeing that the Association has a positive impact on their student experience

2020 Roll-out 38.4%
2020 Soft-Launch 32.1%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available (anticipated Jan 2022)

Metric 16

Annual NSS Question 26 - % of responders identifying positive for effective representation

No new data available until 2021 NSS results are published (anticipated July 2021)

Metric 17

Annual volunteering feedback – % volunteers identifying positive growth & development

2020 data not yet available

Metric 18

Annual Representation/ Service Review – % OU committee staff identifying positive student impact/influence in committees

2019 Review 82.0%
No new data available until next review August 2021

INFLUENCE & TRANSFORM

IMPACT

Metric 19

Qualitative Impact Reporting:

See CEC Quarterly Impact Reports (separate CEC paper - 04/21/01)

See Freshers Evaluation Report (separate CEC paper – 04/21/07)

Appendix 2 – CEC Meeting Attendance (2021 to date)

Appendices 3 & 4– Impact update prepared for February 2021 Council Meeting

ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

MAINTAIN AN ENABLING
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

Metric 20

Annual Membership Survey Question 26 – % responders selecting 'agree' options on whether the Association is living its values

Integrity:

2020 survey – 42.3%

Equality & Inclusivity:

2020 survey – 46.1%

Openness:

2020 survey – 44.3%

Collaboration:

2020 survey – 42.7%

No new data until 2021 AMS results are available
(anticipated Jan 2022)



**SECTION B:
STRATEGY PROJECTS UPDATES**

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
<p>Project 1</p> <p>Initiation Status: In Progress</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Overall Scope: Improve our understanding of student needs, expectations and motivations and conduct a regular review of our services, engagement activities and communications.</p> <p>Workstream 1A: Conduct membership research and analysis. Develop and launch the Annual Membership Survey to gain membership feedback. The survey will provide valuable on-going data for strategic KPI tracking, provide inputs for service/activity reviews and help to inform business decision-making.</p> <p>Workstream 1B: Service & Activity Reviews. Create the process for an annual service and activity review and facilitate the first such review before transitioning the process into BAU. The annual reviews will enable us to assess, on an on-going basis, the effectiveness and impact of our work and enable informed decision-making on resource allocation/prioritisation.</p>	<p>Workstream 1A: Analysis of roll-out response data is underway. As the AMS has now been tested and launched it will move across to Business-as-Usual and sit within the Strategy & Research Business plan for delivery and reporting. This project workstream will therefore be treated as 'complete' and will not be reported on further within the strategy projects portfolio.</p> <p>Workstream 1B: The CEC approved the proposal to delay the first annual service review until the results of the roll-out are available. It is anticipated that this workstream will be able to get underway c. May 2021, subject to project resource capacity. Staff Lead on this project will now transition across to Beth Metcalf. CEC Lead is to be agreed.</p>

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
<p>Project 2</p> <p>Initiation Status: In Progress</p>	<p>GREEN</p>	<p>Overall Scope: Commission a study into the feasibility of providing individual representation for students.</p> <p>Phase 1: Identify needs, assess options and develop recommendations and funding requirements. Prepare a full business case for presentation to OU PVC-Students.</p> <p>Phase 2 (subject to funding provision): Develop and implement individual representation resources and services for a fixed pilot programme period. The pilot programme will provide ‘proof of concept’ for the realisation of the benefits identified in the Phase 1 business case. It will also provide the evidence base for the development of a case to secure additional funding to allow the permanent inclusion of individual representation for students in the Association’s services portfolio.</p>	<p>Phase 1: Written approval received for funding in January 2021.</p> <p>Phase 2: Recruitment process for new Student Advisor role completed, with Amy Ferguson being appointed to the role on an fixed term secondment running to 09/10/22. Role start date is 10/05/21, pre-induction familiarisation is under way. Anticipated commencement date for the service is start date is July/August 2021. Re-phased funding agreed for 2020-21, 2021-22 & 2022-23 to reflect later commencement date and later end date to pilot programme. Staff project lead will transition to Beth Metcalf/Amy Ferguson.</p>

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 3 Initiation Status: Not yet started	N/A	Implement a student support resource library. Explore opportunities to expand our student support services through partnerships with external service providers, support agencies and societies.	Currently no anticipated start date.
Project 4 Initiation Status: Not yet started	N/A	Create meaningful on-going connections and communications with OU students at all key stages in their student journey.	The work for the initial part of this project is to chart the student journey and identify comms & engagement touchpoints. This project will be initiated during April for the work to complete by end June to feed into Project #15 (pg 22)
Project 5 Initiation Status: Not yet started	N/A	Develop and publish a student engagement value statement in order to actively promote the benefits of engaging in the wider student community and to encourage greater student involvement in Association activities and events.	This work has now been incorporated into the scope of Project #15 (pg 22) and this will no longer be treated as a discrete project.
Project 6 Initiation Status: Not yet started	N/A	Work with OU principal stakeholders to encourage the OU to do more in promoting, sign-posting and supporting the work of the Association.	This work has now been incorporated into the scope of Project #15 (pg 22) and this will no longer be treated as a discrete project.
Project 7 Initiation Status: Not yet started	N/A	Create new communities where students can benefit from social interaction and informal mutual support. Create more opportunities for students to support other students through	Currently no anticipated start date.

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 8 Initiation Status: In Progress	GREEN	<p>Overall scope: Complete an analysis of the Association’s internal and external stakeholders in order to develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan.</p> <p>Workstream 8A: Stakeholder mapping exercise – identify all internal and external stakeholder groups and develop an understanding of the importance, contributions and potential impacts of each group for the successful delivery of our strategy.</p> <p>Workstream 8B: Develop and implement a stakeholder engagement plan to support the delivery of our strategic aims and objectives. The plan will include the objectives and aims of any engagement/comms with each of the stakeholder groups and will be used to inform decisions on the choice of engagement/comms channels, comms content, timings and priorities. Stakeholder analysis and mapping will also provide inputs for strategic projects #6 & #9.</p>	<p>Workstream 8A: The stakeholder maps have now been generated. Three maps have been created, one for the OU Students Association, one for the OU and a third for the external stakeholder environment. Additional information and amendments will be required on a regular basis due to the nature of the task of stakeholder mapping.</p> <p>Workstream 8B: Further to a number of meetings of the ‘External Engagement Plan’ working group, a completed draft document has been produced. The OU engagement plan working group never met due to scheduling issues with some of the volunteers so this work is being progressed independently and is expected to complete shortly. The plans will be used as an input for Strategy Project #15 to align the stakeholder engagement work with the marcomms strategy and planning work.</p>

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
<p>Project 9</p> <p>Initiation Status: In Progress</p>	<p>AMBER</p>	<p>Revised Overall Scope:</p> <p>To develop a Representation Action Plan to support the shared goals of the Association and Open University to ensure Student Voice is effectively heard at all levels of the University to improve outcomes for students. This work will aim to remove barriers to inclusion, increase engagement.</p> <p>The action plan will:</p> <p>Develop, in conjunction with the OU, a shared Code of Practice for academic representation with the aim of improving the effectiveness of student voice within OU governance.</p> <p>Support the University's own Student Voice Action Plan</p> <p>Develop shared principles for best practise for Student Engagement, working with key OU stakeholders to promote the standards and embed student engagement in OU activities and projects.</p>	<p>Following the agreement of the CEC and Trustees in January/February to pause this project pending a re-scope, an amended scope has now been developed. The project has the same aims and desired outcomes as were initially proposed but the scope now reflects adjustments to the activity focus areas.</p> <p>Key stakeholders have contributed towards the re-scoping of the project to take this work forward and a new staff project lead has been identified. Initial work is underway to identify key groups to involve in the working group for the action plan and OU stakeholders have already been identified as well as students who wish to be involved.</p> <p>Status is amber due to upcoming staffing changes in the Volunteering & Representation Team which may cause some initial delays.</p>

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 10 Initiation Status: Not yet started	N/A	Establish a process for authorising, funding, supporting and running campaigns. Produce a manifesto for life-long learning.	Currently no anticipated start date. Work has been carried out independently of the project portfolio to develop manifestos through the Policy & Public Affairs agenda and to look at mobilisation campaigns. The viability of this work remaining as a discrete project will be assessed.
Project 11 Initiation Status: In Progress	GREEN	To commission an external review of the OU Student Association governance structures and mechanisms that will result in clear and achievable recommendations for change that can lead to improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation.	<p>This project is well underway with completion due to take place in the next period. The working group for this project includes the following: Sarah Jones, President; Rob Avann, Chief Executive; Mark Price, Trustee; Matt Porterfield, VP Admin; Julian Lomas, lead consultant from Almond Tree Strategic Consulting; Bryan Thomas, supporting associate consultant from CPB Projects.</p> <p>With the departure of Wendy Burrell at the end of February 2021, staff leadership for this project is now fully with Rob Avann. Meetings of the working group took place on 15/12, 13/1 and 18/2. The final scheduled meeting will take place on 25/3 to receive and consider a draft outcomes report, which will then be finalised ready for submission. The process to date has included desk research and consideration of appropriate documentation, a stakeholder survey and a series of interviews, all as per the agreed scope.</p>

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 12 Initiation Status: In Progress	N/A	Identify a model of 'One Team' working and produce a 'protocol' for student representatives and staff members identifying clear expectations. Communicate a 'One Team' message and intent, devising a 'One Team' action plan and designing/leading 'One Team' sessions and activities.	Project initiated, but progress reporting not yet available.
Project 13 Initiation Status: Not yet started	N/A	Devise an agenda that highlights, encourages and celebrates our stated values.	Currently no anticipated start date.

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 14 Initiation Status: In Progress	GREEN	Develop and implement an action plan to further the advancement of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) throughout all Association policies, activities and ways of working.	<p>Although the CEC were happy to back the Working Group's request to become a Committee, the Board of Trustees were keen to hold off until the recommendations from the Governance Review were received.</p> <p>Work is under way all pledge areas (which are being treated as 'mini-projects') - key areas of progress are on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledge 2 – An equalities action plan has been developed • Pledge 6 – Equality Impact Assessment event pilot successful, will also be piloted on the Social Media Policy and then rolled out with guidance. • Pledge 9 – Resource bank on course for 'go live' date of end March <p>New Item – We have also added a new project around EDI structures within the OU, looking to create a map showing the different Groups and what they're responsible for so that we know who we need to work with on different projects if we need help.</p> <p>The Group shared an update to both the CEC and BoT.</p>

Project Number	Project Status (Active Projects Only)	Project Scope / Description	Project Updates (Active Projects Only)
Project 15 Initiation Status: In Progress	GREEN	<p>Overall Scope: Develop Communications Strategy and Marcomms Plan.</p> <p>Part 1: Develop Association Communications Strategy in same format as other enabling strategies (Volunteering & Research) incorporating aims (linked to strategic aims), objectives and measures of success – April 2021.</p> <p>Part 2: Develop Marcomms Planning Tool by merging comms matrix work to date with stakeholder engagement outputs from Project #8. Planning tool to identify external/OU/membership audiences, audience comms objectives, audience messaging themes and channels/timing considerations – May/June 2021.</p> <p>Part 3: Develop Association Marcomms Plan for 2021-22 AY with clearly identified actions, responsibilities/accountabilities and monitoring/evaluation mechanisms – July 2021.</p>	<p>Project initiated in March 2021.</p> <p>Part 2 will incorporate the work that was planned to be separately undertaken as Project #5 (to be done as part of developing audience messaging themes in Part 2): Develop and publish a student engagement value statement in order to actively promote the benefits of engaging in the wider student community and to encourage greater student involvement in Association activities and events.</p> <p>The Marcomms Plan for 2021-22 which will be developed in Part 3 will incorporate the work that was planned to be separately undertaken as Strategy Project #6: Work with OU principal stakeholders to encourage the OU to do more in promoting, sign-posting and supporting the work of the Association.</p> <p>Strategy Project #4 will be initiated with a timeline to chart the student journey and comms/engagement touch-points by the end of June so that the outputs of project #4 are available as inputs for Part 3 of this project.</p>



**SECTION C:
BUSINESS PLANS UPDATES**

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Chief Executive	<p>Our subvention for 2021-22 has been confirmed by the PVC-Students team in line with our projections.</p> <p>The Governance review is nearing completion and will report to CEC and the BoT in April and May.</p> <p>The revised Relationship Agreement was approved and is now in place.</p> <p>We have completed recruitment to several staff roles, including the new Student Advisor; two new senior management roles; maternity cover for Head of Executive Support & Staff Welfare etc.</p> <p>We are working through a proposal around how we might implement co-option to vacant CEC roles rather than running another by-election.</p>	<p>We are working through the changes to the staff management structure and associated issues around recruiting to vacancies and sorting our cover arrangements for various aspects of our work and ask for patience while we work through this with the new team.</p> <p>Ouset is currently working on the development of a new strategy, which the Association Trustees have made clear is a pre-requisite for any future funding donation.</p> <p>We will be looking to add benchmarking and comparators to future iterations of the strategy performance report.</p> <p>We are working through our recovery planning for the post-Covid future which will include reviewing working arrangements, the learning from this past year and consideration of stop, start, continue activities for the future.</p> <p>Behaviour of volunteers in some quarters remains an issue, with associated impacts on capacity and morale which is holding us back.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
<p>Deputy Chief Executive (Finance & Resources)</p>	<p>Our Data Protection, Privacy and Records Retention Policies have all been updated. Following Brexit, we have appointed DataRep to provide representation to our EEA residing members, under Article 27 of the EU GDPR.</p> <p>Our “Opt Out of Membership” form has been updated to minimise the risk of students unintentionally opting out of membership. Our ambition is still to work towards being able to offer students the ability to manage a full range of communication preferences.</p> <p>A working group has been established to determine our risk appetite with regards to investment of surplus funds, and within parameters to be agreed, explore the available options.</p> <p>The senior management recruitment is complete and I am now supporting a short handover period.</p>	<p>The third lockdown saw our interim stock take postponed. Stock takes are important to minimise the risk of stock being inaccurately valued in our accounts and also to reduce the risk of loss through inappropriate storage conditions or fraud. We have introduced some processes to mitigate this risk, until we can access the warehouse again.</p> <p>Changes in part of the CSR programme, and a focus internally during the pandemic has meant our dialogue with OU colleagues about improving our access to data and arrangements for our opt out database, has been interrupted. To avoid the risk of our data needs being overlooked in the design of the OU’s core systems, we should aim to re-establish these links in the next quarter.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Community	<p>Freshers was a highlight again this quarter. Historically, the January/February event would be smaller scale. However, with 49 events, including a consultation with Younger Students, a University Challenge event and a presentation from four postgraduate research students, engagement was increased this year. Thanks to all involved. A full evaluation will be presented to the April CEC. Working alongside the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Working Group we completed an Equality Impact Assessment as a pilot for Freshers. This valuable process prompted the production of new Guidance Notes for Session Hosts. We look forward to rolling out EIAs across the other areas of our work. Subscribers to our general Association newsletter and the new Welsh newsletter are growing and engagement is positive. We continue to see growth from our clubs in terms of their number, their membership and their activities. Both OSTARS and the OU Space Science Club now hope to become Societies which is proof that the clubs are acting as a stepping stone towards becoming a society.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, we experienced some disruptive behaviour in one or two Freshers sessions. Whilst rare, and handled effectively following our existing processes, these instances are upsetting for volunteers, staff and attendees. It is important our volunteers are prepared and supported should incidents like this occur during events they are hosting. Additional guidance has been shared, and two additional training sessions are planned. We have also introduced a Code of Conduct for Online Events which is shared on each website listing and at the start of each event. Continued reporting and monitoring of incidents will enable us to continually assess the risk in relation to online events.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Digital Comms	<p>We were able to successfully support Freshers Jan 2021 by providing the bespoke microsite despite the lack of an Optimisation Officer who would normally carry out this role. We were pleased to fill this position and welcome Andy Evans to the team.</p> <p>After concerted efforts to widen promotion, the Association experienced improved sales for both TOTUM cards and merchandise from the online shop. We were also pleased to receive submissions from the new OU Pride group for the Hoot and we set up their new page on oustudents.com.</p> <p>We carried out interviews with four suppliers for the website project and have sent a recommendation to the Trustees.</p>	<p>The website project is a major area of focus. We will be careful not to allow it to distract us from other priorities.</p> <p>Staff haven't taken a great deal of leave this academic year. The induction of a new team member will hopefully make this more achievable and will improve staff wellbeing and team resilience.</p> <p>We're also still unable to film and take photos on campus impacting our ability to have fresh up-to-date content for use in our communications.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Executive Support & Staff Welfare	<p>The January CEC was the first of the term where CEC observers could attend the meeting remotely. Feedback was positive and well received.</p> <p>Staff recruitment has also been successful with four recruitments taken place; Digital Communications Optimisation Officer; Student Advisor; Head of Executive Support & Staff Welfare (maternity cover) and Volunteering and Representation Administrator. Two internal candidates were successful in two roles: Gabriella Cull as Head of Executive Support & Staff Welfare and Amy Undrell as Student Advisor. Further recruitment is taking place for the positions of Volunteer and Representation Administrator, Head of Volunteering and Representation and Executive Support Assistant.</p> <p>There has also been an increase in staff taking up training courses, following the distribution of a staff training booklet.</p>	<p>We continue to face difficulties with the new system that came into place on 30 November. Obtaining admin rights has proven to be challenging and prevents us from being able to oversee staff records. Reporting to the Trustees on staff’s annual leave figures has been affected, however following a meeting with the Head of People Business Partnering, we hope to soon have a contact within people services to help us with these ongoing issues.</p> <p>There have been no further meetings of the Culture Steering Group, resulting in a lack of progress. Talks are underway into revamping the group with a new project lead to move the recommendations made in the review forward.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Finance & Resources	<p>January saw the completion of a full budget review, consulting with each budget holder to gain a better understanding of plans and resourcing needs for the remainder of the year and reflecting these in an updated financial forecast.</p> <p>Reporting on the trading operation has been improved, in response to feedback from Trustees and the new working group established to monitor performance of the OU Students Shop.</p> <p>We have reviewed our expenditure controls and drafted a procurement procedure to not only better suit remote working, but also to improve accountability over spending decisions. This should enable us to evidence, more easily, value for money purchases, particularly at higher levels of spend. With changes to the senior management team, this process has also led us to consider a revision to the payment authorisation thresholds and workflow.</p>	<p>The March 2020 valuation of the Universities Superannuation Scheme is likely to result in significant increases to current pension scheme contributions for both employees and employers. There is a risk that our costs will not be fully covered by subvention funding, as well as the provision for the pension deficit recovery exceeding our reserves. It will be important to maintain our dialogue around this with PVC Students and our Finance Business Partner.</p> <p>Working with our OU links to resolve some issues arising from the change of their HR and Finance systems is taking longer than expected and absorbing resource.</p> <p>We have, so far, been unable to overcome barriers to trading with customers in the EEA following Brexit. This is because most of our products originate outside the UK and therefore tariffs would apply, payable by the customer. We are working to resolve this as soon as we can.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Operations	<p>Formal approval of the Terms of Reference for the OU Students Shop Working Group including membership structure for the term of office 2020-2022</p> <p>Maintenance of the target profit margins on merchandise resulting in good levels of income. Successful completion of two big orders for the Open University Residential Schools.</p> <p>Ouset successfully processed 12 funding applications for January and February presentations, with a total fund allocation is £22,254. Ouset successfully co-opted Stephanie Stubbins to the Board of Trustees. Ouset has (now) a full composition of Trustees for the remainder of the 2020-22 term of office.</p> <p>Successful move of unsubscribe requests to a designated mailbox resulting in improved monitoring and management of requests.</p>	<p>Brexit continues to impact the sales outside of the UK. The Shop for the time being is not able to sell any merchandise into EEA. There is more work underway to resolve this situation. Exam papers are not affected by that change.</p> <p>Limited access to the stock due to Covid, resulting in delays in processing of exchanges and customer returns. Stock take delayed until further notice (related to the lockdown rules).</p> <p>Unknown future of the face-to-face events including graduation ceremonies and their impact on trading. Added to revenue generated from webstore sales, there is a risk of breaching the charity small trading tax exemption limit of £80k from next year. We are therefore closely monitoring sales and exploring options for managing turnover within this limit.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Policy & Public Affairs	<p>The evaluation of Wales Student Volunteer Panel will highlight successes and areas for improvement while providing an evidence-base for roll-out in Scotland and Ireland. Devolved parliament election manifestos have been published.</p> <p>The relationship with Athabasca has progressed with the Memorandum of Understanding having been agreed by all partners, with work to develop an international network underway.</p> <p>Influencing activity has continued including correspondence to ministers and participation in parliamentary committee and All-Party Parliamentary group discussions.</p>	<p>Having discussed the podcast with DigiComms, I have decided not to pursue the podcast idea and instead explore alternative methods of communicating policy and public affairs issues to our members.</p> <p>COVID19 continues to make in person events impossible, which has limited influencing opportunities, and creating links with brick university SUs while they are supporting students during this time seems inappropriate.</p> <p>As I am stepping into the role of Director for Engagement on 1st April, there will be a period of time where the Policy & Public Affairs Manager position is vacant while a decision is made regarding how to replace the role. This may mean that we are not as active in this area for a short period, although I will do the best I can to ensure that opportunities are not missed.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
<p>Strategy & Research</p>	<p>The latest Strategy Performance Report is showing positive trends in increasing awareness, engagement & impact through activities such as Freshers, Student Voice Week & Black History Month. We are seeing increasing engagement levels through increased online events, high recommendation levels from students for our services and activities, along with building momentum on the delivery of strategic projects.</p> <p>An update report was prepared for delivery to the University Council in February demonstrating our impact in key strategic focus areas.</p> <p>In our research & insights area we have supported the planning and delivery of this year's OU student consultative meetings and are busy analysing the response data from our Annual Membership Survey, scoping out our EDI research project and resources library and identifying evidence-generation requirements to support our policy and positions statements.</p>	<p>Our Key Performance Indicator (KPI) tracking and metrics are showing that we still have challenges in encouraging wider participation in activities where we seek to engage the entire study body such as in the Annual Membership Survey and elections.</p> <p>Capacity and workloads within the CEC and staff team remain a challenge for initiating further strategic projects.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Support	<p>Our Groups are off to a very good 2021 with both OU Pride and the DSG doing lots in relation to membership engagement. The BAME Group are also going through Committee elections and by the CEC weekend there will be a Committee in place.</p> <p>The Support Team were part of the project team that brought students the ‘Staying motivated over Christmas’ page on the Help Centre – now the ‘Stay Motivated with Study’ page. We were also part of the working group that brought you the ‘Your Wellbeing’ page under the ‘succeed’ tab on every module page. Both these pages feature appropriate links to the Students Association information and activities.</p> <p>We are currently onboarding another round of volunteers for the Peer Support service.</p>	<p>The Projects Officer (maternity cover) in the Support Team left the team to join the OU’s EDI Team which has left the Team down a member, impacting on our resource.</p> <p>We have reduced our current workload and until we are back to full capacity will be unable to take on any new projects.</p>

Business Area	Achievements & Deliverables	Issues & Risks
Volunteering & Representation	<p>Our team of Student Representatives is almost at full capacity, with a few vacancies across SRG and CCR roles, but the new reps are really settling into their roles and there is a lot of enthusiasm from some new faces!</p> <p>The new Representation Pathway opens March and recruitment for reps for the 2021-23 term opens in April!</p> <p>We also had an incredible response to our Micro-volunteers recruitment with over 100 students selected to take part, this group will be inducted and welcomed across easter.</p>	<p>The volunteer policy is due for renewal September 2021, and so work is starting now on the refresh. This work will include a focus on volunteer values and behaviours to bring our approach in line with the one team principles and to ensure we have a process for managing behaviour which steps outside of our values.</p> <p>The next three months will be very busy for our team as we open rep recruitment and recruit a new Head of Team and Admin, therefore we will be at a limited capacity for new work which has not already been scheduled in.</p>



**OU Students
Association**

PO Box 397
Walton Hall
Milton Keynes
United Kingdom
MK7 6BE

Contact us at

-  www.oustudents.com
-  [@OUstudents](https://twitter.com/OUstudents)
-  fb.com/OUstudents
-  instagram.com/oustudentslive